Better Days But...
There are signs the golf industry is pulling itself out of the economic doldrums. But the financial slump isn't over yet, experts say.
By Larry Aylward

Time For an Annual Review
It started off great, what with Phil winning the Masters. But things started to get ugly around U.S. Open time.
By Geoff Shackelford

Manners Matter
Proper etiquette among players has diminished on the golf course. What can superintendents do to help it return?
By Brian H. Kehrl

Up and Down
A look back at the year in statistics and sayings, including results of our recent superintendent survey and the best quotables of the year.

Sowing the Seeds of R&D
Companies continue to search for top turfgrass species.
By Peter Blais
Cover Story
BY GOLFDOM STAFF
Here's an in-depth look inside the state of your industry.

22-50

About the cover
We think this silhouette of a golfer says something about the state of the industry — while things are getting better, there are still some unknowns.
(By Mediolmages and Tom Johnson of Advanstar Communications)

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Sharp reels are an essential component to assuring proper turf management.

In the Minority
By Luke Wagner
What are young professionals doing to land their first superintendent jobs? Sometimes it's a matter of taking advantage of a not-so-super opportunity.

Weed Control
Compiled by Larry Aylward
It's winter, and a Northern superintendent's thoughts turn to weed control.

TurfGrass Trends
This month, GOLFDOM’s practical research digest for turf managers discusses overseeding of perennial ryegrasses on bermudagrass fairways, among other topics. See pages 63-78.
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Legend has it that Wayne Otto got his nickname, “The Wee One,” on the first tee of the hallowed grounds of The Old Course at St. Andrews. Wayne was ready to tee off with fellow superintendent Danny Quast and Stan Zontek and Pat O’Brien of the USGA Green Section. Even in that auspicious place, the four were engaged in the usual pre-round banter about what stakes they would play for, when one of their craggy local caddies was heard to tell another in a deep Scots brogue, “My money’s on the wee one.”

Wayne, who died last month at age 65 after a valiant battle with cancer, was “wee” in stature but a giant in spirit. He was a fixture in the Wisconsin golf community for five decades and one of those all-too-rare superintendents who actually retired from Ozaukee Country Club after 35 years. In retirement, and fighting the ticking clock of cancer, he and Quast completed their marvelous book, *Golf Course Turf Management — Tools & Techniques*. Wayne is survived by his glorious wife, JoAnn, two children and four grandchildren.

The standard obituary ends there, because Wayne simply wasn't a standard guy. The words “mirthful” and “turfhead” seem odd when put together, but Wayne was both. He was a barrel of fun to be around, but according to his many friends he would talk turf with anyone, anywhere and anytime. If you ever met Wayne at the GCSAA show or a golf tournament, you’re probably shaking your head in agreement right now. He was, quite simply, passionately intense about the art and science of growing grass.

“If I can’t think of anybody who has talked more turf to more superintendents than Wayne,” says his longtime friend and partner-in-crime, Rod Johnson, certified superintendent of Pine Hills Country Club in Sheboygan, Wis. “While he supported everything that improved our professional standing, turf talk was always more important.”

He practiced what he preached in terms of agronomy. Marc Davison, certified superintendent of Green Bay Country Club, recalls Wayne’s lean and mean approach to fertilizing greens.

“He told me once that he just gave his greens a ‘sniff’ of nitrogen. He said he’d open a bag of fertilizer and drive around each green with the open bag in the back of his cart. Obviously, he was joking, but that was Wayne.”

He was also always right in the middle of practical jokes, but more often on the receiving end. Many of them often involved showerheads and toilet paper. Even though Wayne was incessantly zinged by Johnson and others, he never got mad and rarely retaliated. He just took pleasure in being part of the gag.

There are myriad other stories, many about Wayne’s insatiable appetite for Mexican food, hot sauce that would bulge the eyeballs of the strongest among us and Cushmans that mysteriously ended up in creeks during the night. But the constant theme of all the messages I received from his colleagues was the unconditional joy he radiated when he was on the course or amongst his friends.

Many will miss him and mourn, but all of us in this business should take a cue from Wayne and celebrate the fact that we were blessed to be a part of something that seems to attract such people. I’m wagering that Wayne is up in the Big Somewhere right now seeking out his fellow superintendents for a chat.

And who will win the inevitable heavenly arguments about turf? My money’s on the Wee One.

Pat Jones, the publisher of Golfdom, can be reached at 440-891-3126 or pjones@advanstar.com
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When I spoke with Jim Jennings late last year, he was looking for work in golf course maintenance. The 47-year-old former steelworker was about to graduate from college with a two-year degree in turf management and was embarking on a new career.

At the time, Jennings was as worried as any new graduate about finding a job. "Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and wonder if there are any jobs out there," Jennings said.

It took him a few months, but Jennings found a job on the golf course maintenance crew at Shady Hollow Country Club in Massillon, Ohio. He says things have been going well for him there.

He did receive one big scare, however. In September, the courses superintendent and the man who hired Jennings announced to the crew that he was let go from the course. When Jennings heard the news, he wondered if he and other members of the course's core staff would also be let go. His troubled mind took him back to the steel mill, where he experienced a similar scenario so many times before.

Jennings worked in the unstable steel industry for nearly 25 years, where layoffs are as ordinary as rows of bungalow homes in blue-collar neighborhoods. All told, Jennings was laid off five times during his steel-industry career. He was called back to work four times. But when the mill at which he was employed announced it was closing for good in October 2002 and moving its machinery to China, Jennings knew there was no chance of being recalled a fifth time.

When Jennings joined Shady Hollow in the spring, he figured he wouldn't have to worry about getting laid off from the 18-hole private course. But when the course's superintendent walked in the lunch room and told of his fate that day, the same sick and sinking feeling formed in Jennings' gut as when the foreman at the steel mill announced to crew members that they would be soon out of work.

"It was like, oh man, here we go again," Jennings says.

While Jennings was left worrying for several weeks about his fate, he learned recently that he and the others would not be let go. With the hol-
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TIDBIT OF THE MONTH

Commute and Play

More and more "commuter communities" are emerging across the country, and most are located many miles from metropolitan areas. Yet many of these new large-scale golf-related subdivisions are near major highways, allowing residents to drive to work in the morning and come home to play at night. Among the commuter communities riding this wave of the future are the 4,235-acre Bright's Creek off Interstate 26 in Columbus, N.C., and the 3,785-home Suncadia project in Roslyn, Wash., 70 miles east of Seattle via U.S. Interstate 90. For details on these and other golf projects around the U.S., visit www.golfconstructionnews.com.

COURTESY OF:

Crowded House?

The majority of superintendents we surveyed online recently are against the Club Managers Association of America joining the Golf Industry Show in 2007. Here's how they responded when we asked them what they thought of the merger:

- No, I don't like it.
- What happened to our show?
- I guess it's OK.
- Great idea. Welcome!

Based on 223 responses

Golfdom

Golf Rounds Played

The percentages below represent the difference in number of rounds played in August 2004 compared to the number of rounds played in August 2003.

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<th>Y.T.D.</th>
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Puppy Love

We know that superintendents are fond of dogs and that many own border collies and other pooches. Did you know that:

- Petting a dog can help reduce blood pressure, slow heart rate and steady breathing?
- Bonding with a dog can stimulate brain chemicals that improve your mood?